

Message Text

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SUBJ: COMMENTS BY ADMIRAL CROWE ON U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TO SINGAPORE AND ACCESS TO NAVAL BASE FACILITIES

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB FROM HOLDRIDGE

REF: SINGAPORE 3216

1. I HAD GOOD TALK WITH ADMIRAL CROWE JULY 30 IN WHICH HE
REVIEWED FOR ME THE MAIN POINTS OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN INTER-
DEPARTMENTAL TEAM AND GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE (GOS), AND COM-
MENTED ON AREAS IN WHICH HE THOUGHT U.S. MIGHT BE MOST RESPONSIVE
TO NEEDS STATED BY GOS. HE ALSO GAVE ME HIS THOUGHTS ON ENSURING
ACCESS TO NAVAL BASE AND FUEL DEPOT BASED ON HIS CONVERSATIONS
WITH UK DEFENSE AND FCO OFFICIALS IN LONDON WHILE EN ROUTE TO
MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE.

2. ADMIRAL CROWE FELT STRONGLY THAT BEST WAY FOR U.S. TO
DISPLAY A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD NEEDS OUTLINED BY GOS WOULD
BE ON MATTER OF C-130'S. SINGAPOREANS HAVE SETTLED ON REQUIREMENT
FOR 4 C-130'S, BUT COULD TAKE ANY NUMBER BETWEEN 2 AND 5.
THEY CAN USE SUCH AIRCRAFT NOW IN CONNECTION WITH FLYING TROOPS
TO TAIWAN FOR TRAINING AND FOR LONG-RANGE OCEAN RECONNAISSANCE,
AND SIMPLEST WAY TO HANDLE THIS REQUIREMENT WOULD BE VIA
C-130 AIRCRAFT PRESENTLY UNDERGOING REHABILITATION IN SINGAPORE.

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CROWE BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT IF NECESSARY GOS WOULD BE WILLING

TO PURCHASE NEW C-130'S AND WAIT 18-24 MONTHS FOR DELIVERY, SINCE MAJOR USE INTENDED FOR AIRCRAFT WOULD BE FERRYING TROOPS TO BRUNEI JUNGLE WARFARE SCHOOL AND THIS FACILITY NOT EXPECTED TO COME INTO BEING IN LESS THAN 18 MONTHS. IN EVENT PURCHASE OF NEW AIRCRAFT DECIDED UPON, GOS WOULD PROBABLY WANT FMS CREDIT.

3. OTHER AREAS WHERE CROWE THOUGHT WE COULD BE RESPONSIVE WOULD BE COUNTERINSURGENCY SEMINAR, HELICOPTERS, AND RIVERINE CRAFT. HE BELIEVED GOS REQUIREMENTS IN THESE MATTERS COULD BE DEALT WITH REASONABLY PROMPTLY, POSSIBLY WITH SOME SUBSTITUTIONS IN CASE OF MATERIEL, E.G. 20 UH-1H HELICOPTERS RATHER THAN 6 SA-61'S. HOWITZERS WERE SOMETHING ELSE AGAIN IN VIEW OF LONG LEAD TIME, AND ADMIRAL CROWE SPECULATED THAT SINGAPOREANS MIGHT TURN TO INTERNATIONAL ARMS MARKET TO MEET NEEDS.

4. REGARDING ACCESS TO NAVAL BASE FACILITIES, BRITISH DEFENSE OFFICIALS IMPRESSED CROWE AS WANTING TO BE COOPERATIVE. UK RETENTION OF THESE FACILITIES IN ANY EVENT ACCORDED WITH DESIRE ON PART OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR OWN SHIP VISITS AND TO CONTINUE TO MAKE CONTRIBUTION TO FIVE POWER DEFENSE AGREEMENT. ARRANGEMENT ENVISAGED WAS FOR TWO UNIFORMED BRITISH OFFICERS NOW EXERCISING AUTHORITY OVER POL STORAGE, DOCKS, AND 15 LOCAL EMPLOYEES TO BE REPLACED BY TWO CIVILIANS, WITH ALL OTHER ARRANGEMENTS REMAINING UNCHANGED. PERHAPS SOME FINANCIAL HELP FROM U.S. WOULD BE REQUESTED.

5. ON OTHER HAND, CROWE FOUND FCO MUCH MORE RESERVED. PRINCIPAL FCO OFFICER WITH WHOM HE TALKED (IRELAND) WOULD SAY ONLY THAT U.S. SHOULD GO AHEAD AND INITIATE REQUEST FOR UK COOPERATION. CROWE HAD IMPRESSION THAT IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY FOR WASHINGTON TO WEIGH IN POLITICALLY WITH UK LABOR GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO FULL UK WITHDRAWAL, IN ORDER FOR US TO SUCCEED.

6. COMMENT: I FULLY ENDORSE ADMIRAL CROWE'S POSITION ON C-130'S AND JOIN MY PREDECESSOR IN URGING THAT WE BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE IN MEETING GOS REQUEST. THIS IS A MATTER TO WHICH SINGAPOREANS ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE, AND FAILURE TO COME THROUGH MIGHT WELL COLOR THEIR JUDGMENT AS TO HOW WELL WE ARE PREPARED TO COME THROUGH ON OTHER ISSUES WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN. FROM
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GOS STANDPOINT, PURCHASE ON FAVORABLE TERMS OF C-130'S NOW BEING REHABILITATED WOULD BE MOST DESIRABLE SOLUTION. REGARDING NAVAL BASE FACILITIES, IF THIS IS A QUESTION REQUIRING POLITICAL REPRESENTATIONS TO THE UK, I CONSIDER THAT WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ACT, AND SOON. HOLDRIDGE

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